

922 Willow Creek Road
Corvallis, MT 59828
July 3, 2007

Chuck Oliver, District Ranger
Mary Laws
Darby Ranger Station
PO Box 388
Darby, MT 59829

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Ravalli County Commissioners

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To whom it may concern:

I'm writing to state that I vehemently oppose the USFS proposed quarry development up Lost Horse Road.

Why would the USFS consider an industrial site around a developed recreational area? Noise pollution and air pollution from heavy equipment and rock crushers would be a risk to public health. Then, there's the potential danger from noise and commotion to the many horsemen and their animals who regularly use the Lost Horse facilities.

Is this your idea of bringing the mountain to Muhammed? Why does the USFS need to climb the Lost Horse mountain, knock it down piece by piece and then grind it up to smithereens to provide "cheap" gravel for the maintenance of roads and/or trails that haven't been maintained for years? If it never gets used, it won't be inexpensive, would it? There are numerous privately-owned gravel pits in the Bitterroot Valley. Buy stone that's already the right size from them – and government agencies can support their local economy instead of crushing it.

I can't think of a bigger dead-end road than selling gravel to the County for road maintenance. The existing road maintenance in Ravalli County is almost *non-existent*. Vehicle-eating potholes abound and some of the road conditions are abysmal. After what must have been numerous complaints, road crews finally fixed *parts* of roads, but never finished them, (ie: Willow Creek, Willow Cross Road, and Bass Lane). Every year the county roads get worse, despite what must be a huge increase in the tax-base, based on development, new construction and the taxes on new homes.

How's this scenario?

1) The Ravalli County commissioners can figure out how much the overall income of tax monies collected has increased in the past 20 years, and then they can increase the road maintenance budget to reflect the increase on maintaining our existing infrastructure.

2) Then, they can lecture the USFS on maintaining *EXISTING* roads (or trails) instead of spending money on new ones that won't be maintained either (like maybe the new Chief Joseph/Nez Pierce trail being built up Lost Trail).

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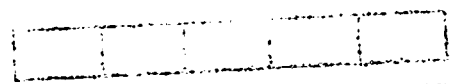
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3) And then, either the USFS or the county financial gurus can do a *make/buy study on the cost* of each yard of gravel that they'll actually use over the next 10 years. It's only good accounting practice. I would hope that the County Commissioners would be smart enough not to give the USFS a blank purchase contract for the *actual* cost of our beloved, ground-up mountain.

There won't ever be more land and mountains, but there seems to be an endless supply of stupid ideas. Do we really need more detours to Common Sense?

If the buck doesn't stop here and now, we the people will pay one way or the other. It doesn't matter whether it's poor management at the local level or the Federal level, or both. We'll not only lose the use of more public land, but we'll pay through the nose to use the gravel roads to get there.

Sincerely,

Catherine Hanson

CC: Glenda Wiles,
Ravalli County Commissioner's Office

Ravalli Republic